

# Professionalism in Adult Education: The Surest Way for Effective Administration of Adult Education in Nigeria

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**Abstract—** The quality or output of any organisation or programme depends to a very large extent on the competence and efficiency of its human resources or personnel. All serious minded organisations spend a very high percentage of their capital in manpower development in order to bring out the quality of the goods or services that will stand them out for success. The need for adequate training and retraining of the human resource of any organisation becomes a matter of optimum survival and as such cannot be toyed with. It is therefore pertinent that the issues of qualified personnel and professionalism be given a second more serious attention if adult education must contribute to national development. Consequently, in adult education being a very important component of education for the socio-economic development of any nation can only succeed if professionalism is given its rightful place. This paper therefore seeks to look into ways Adult education management can be effective in Nigeria through ensuring professionalism.

**Index Terms—** professionalism, adult education.

## I. INTRODUCTION

No organization whether profit or service oriented can grow beyond the level of its own capacity as well as the professional development of its personnel. It is therefore pertinent that the issues of qualified personnel and professionalism be give a second and more serious attention if the adult education must contribute its quota to the overall socioeconomic development of the nation. This paper set out to discuss the professionalism as a factor for effective administration of adult education programmes in Nigeria. The paper dwells into the following areas;

- Conceptual clarification
- Professionalism and programme administration in adult education
- Adult education in Nigeria; situation analysis
- The surest way out
- And conclusion and Recommendations

## II. CONCEPTUAL CLARIFICATION

### Adult Education

As a discipline adult education is as old as human race on earth (Yakusak, 2002). According to Edward (2007) it is in adult education that emphasis is placed on literacy education, education as a process and agent of liberation as tool for

adjustment for self and national development, for cultural awareness and integration for conscientization and group dynamism. Akinpelu (1988 P 17) defined Adult Education as

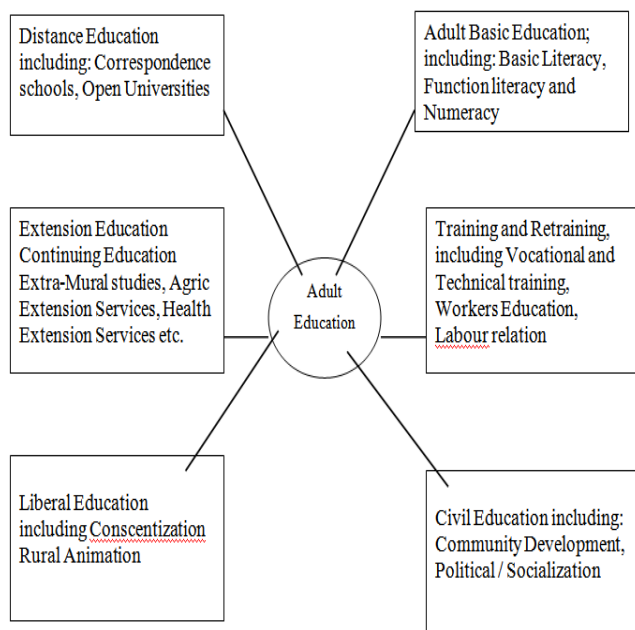
...All and any deliberate and systematically planned educational activities that has the adult as its target, that is designed around the interest and self expressed concern of adult the intention of which is to solve immediate problems and finally it is an activity that is usually part-time.

That is to say that adult education is any organized systematic educational activity carried out outside the framework of the formal system to provide selected type of learning to particular groups in the population of adults as well as children. Adult education generally by the above outlook constitutes an important complement to formal education in any nation's total education effort. Therefore adult education programmes touch the lives of many people and when they are well planned have a high potential for contributing to individual and national development. Another more encompassing definition of Adult Education is the one given by Tugbiyele (1991).

By adult education we do not mean literacy alone. Adult education is more than literacy or remedial education to fill the gap. It is something people need and want as long as they are alive and regardless of the amount of their previous education. It must therefore be an integral part of any modern country's educational system.

The above definition is comprehensive enough to meet various needs and aspiration of those who like to know what adult education is to portray the complexity of adult education as a programme. Oduaran (1991) illustrated adult education in the form below:

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**Fig 1: Forms of Adult Education**

### III. PROFESSIONALISM

For a clearer understanding, the term professionalism can better be ascertained by understanding “profession” and a professional. A profession is a vocation requiring knowledge of some department of learning or science. While “a professional” is one who follows “an occupation as a means of livelihood or gain or one who is engaged in one of the learned professions: Therefore professionalism is exhibited by one of the professional characters, spirits or methods or the standing practices or methods of a professional as distinguished from an amateur. Wikipedia encyclopedia (2008) defines professionalism as “ a mark of distinction obtained through standard training and practice in work life. Becoming a professional involves;

- Unique training;
  - Formal education;
  - Achieving credentials;
  - Activity in continuing education opportunity;
  - Joining the activity involving yourself in professional association.
- a) *Professionalism has the following criteria*
- *Training:* There is an extensive period of training and apprenticeship, usually in high education
  - *Intellectualism:* The intellectual component is dominant
  - *Autonomy:* Professionalism usually have autonomy in their work.
  - *Judgment:* A professional in a position, given their training and education use their fulfillment in determining the appropriate approach to their clients or participants.
  - *Independence:* They can work independently and charge fees worthy of an organization.
  - *Service:* their abilities can providing valuable services to society and operating with little or no self interest

- *Dedication.* Professionals are to be dedicated to their services.
- *Pride:* They take pride in the quality of their work

To also identify a profession there are basic elements to be observed. These elements according to Brandy (2008 p; 2 ) include;

- a. *Philosophy:* Professional has its own philosophy which must be articulated in both written and oral form.
- b. *Body of knowledge:* Professional must have a body of professional literature of research, study and comment.
- c. *Leaders or philosophers:* Professionals have, both historically and currently, those who write about and research on the profession. Leaders can be writers, doers, role models and those active in service.
- d. *Guidelines for Behavior:* professions make codes, guideline, creeds, oaths, commitment statements, belief statements such as statements on ethics and professionalism.
- e. *Admission Requirements.* Professionals in many professions are licensed, certified and have specific initial and advanced education, as well as requirements for on going education. In addition, many profession’s require both initial and ongoing testing for admission and maintaining membership.

### IV. ADMINISTRATION

Administration is used interchangeably with the word management as if the two means one and the same thing. Olaboye (2004) said this is because the two words essentially refer to the process of getting things done through the efforts of other people. He added that the person who gets things done through other people’s efforts is traditionally referred to as manager in private sector organization and as an administrator in the public sector. This is to say the word management is most often used in business and industrial circle while administration is more popular in the civil and public services in Nigeria. What is administration then? Administration according to Olaboye (2004) refers to “the organization and direction of persons in order to accomplish a specific end”. While adult education administration is defined as the process of skillfully arranging the human and material resources and programmes available for adult education and carefully and systematically using them for the achievement of educational objectives. Adult educational administration is therefore an aspect of adult educational management chiefly concern with implementation of management plans, programmes and policies.

### V. PROFESSIONALISM AND PROGRAMME ADMINISTRATION IN ADULT EDUCATION

In a study conducted to establish the relationship between educational qualification and effective leadership, Oduaran (2003) reported that significant relationship existed in the professionalism effectiveness leadership. The study added that the teaching of adult learners in Nigeria unfortunately had been handled with so much laxity that the discipline itself

has become a field to all comers. Similarly, a report from a survey study conducted by Junaaid (2001) indicated that 71% of adult educational staff members are non professionals. The adult educators' distribution of staffers are as follows;

Category of staff	Professionals	Non professional	Total
State Chief Executive	8	29	37
Area Coordinators (Local Government Levels )	205	569	774
Organizers (Ward Level)	712	2107	2819

Fig. 1.2 professionalism and adult education in Nigeria

Departments and agencies of adult education were set up at almost all tiers of government. However to date in Nigeria all these efforts have not yet placed this very important sector of education in its rightfully place. The major issue of effective management has continued to elude the progremmae and one glaring set back had been in the area of well trained and committed manpower in the sector.

Another related fact is that mass literacy programme lacks the organizational means for bring different forms of adult educational programmes within the purview of educational planning. Planning activities for adult education to move forward means qualified professional must be placed appropriately for positive change and development. Experience of the deficiencies and in capabilities of adult education over the years have informed us to be conscious of the job performance of untrained professionals available manpower to work out programmes to deal with the compelling demand and consequently the professionalism is the surest way for effective administration adult education programme.

#### VI. ADULT EDUCATION IN NIGERIA: SITUATION ANALYSIS

A more recent figure on illiteracy level reveals that 49% of the Nigerian populations are illiterate (Federal Ministry of Education, 2006). Available evidence also shows that 56.3% of primary school pupils drop-out of school and swell the number of illiterates and semi-literates. Also, the recurrent effort of the implementation of the Universal Basic Education (UBE) appears to be concentrated on the formal aspect, as nothing seems to suggest serious activities are going on within the adult education sector. There is evidence indicating that activities aimed at adult education and mass literacy programme are untidy and do not involve any systematic planning arrangement.

The professional development of adult education practitioner and condition of the growth of the field is not encouraging. In this regard, Oduaran (1995:19) remarked that:

Adult education has not been fully recognized outside the university as a profession and therefore not been accorded that status which is comparable with other professional bodies.

By this adult education should have legal structure to regulate those who engage in teaching and learning in the field of adult education. Also, we require legal body of registration, it is unfortunate that almost everybody can jump up and say "I can teach adults" although this is not suppose not to be so. Oduara (2003: 101) added that "many unfocused, uncommitted and even ignorant people are masquerading as adult educators and this is one of the reasons why this discipline is not growing fast in Nigeria".

Apart from that, the profound societal ignorance as to what the discipline is really about, since literacy appears to be its most visible features. The consequence of this ignorance has affected the development of the profession. The problem of under funding of the field in spite of the structural growth in relation to the establishment of the agencies of adult education at Federal and State Levels has also affected the status of the profession negatively. This is one of the resultant effects of the constraints of ignorance which in turn affects the development of adult education programmes in Nigeria.

#### VII. THE SUREST WAY OUT

Oduaran (2003 p:101) assert that a profession comes into being as a people who practice an occupation requiring special skills work out a common basis for training, common interest and common standard. Adult education is a discipline, it has a fixed body of knowledge which is given to and must be shown to be possessed by those who seek to be professionals in the3 area. As a profession it seeks to have fixed regulations and ethics for those who elect to come into it. But one cannot at present actually talk about an adult education profession as one would talk about the medical and law profession (Oduaran 2003)

In view of these the stakeholders of adult education programmes in Nigeria should realize the issues that concern the development of adult education requires effective management and administration to be able to strengthen the practice of adult education by laying a solid policies on funding, training and procedures. And that apart from emphasis on literacy programme we should also know that there are millions of Nigerians who needs continuing education, distance education and education for the street children within the limit of the available resources.

By this, it means all the structures will have to utilize their available manpower to work out programmes to deal with the compelling demand and consequently professionalism is the surest way for effective administration of adult education programme.

This paper seek to proffer ways into which adult education administration and management can effectively move forward the development, of the field in Nigeria through ensuring professionalism. The following ways are outlined below;

a. **Vibrant association:** the establishment of Nigerian National council for adult education was a saviour and a move forward towards having a structural formation of the practicing field of adult education. A vibrant association that is needed here is the association that will build ways in having adult education to become a field of professionalism, thus; a body of registration, body of knowledge, philosophy, judgment, guidelines for behaviour, pride, autonomy, intellectualism and unique training.

b. **Advocacy**; for a growing field like adult education requires advocacy to stakeholders in order to lay a foundation that will uplift the profession to the solid practices.

c. **Sensitization**; the profound societal ignorance as to what the discipline is all about must be cleared and develop a society that will appreciate the multifarious benefits of adult education to socioeconomic development of Nigeria.

d. **Employment**; Employment and appointments Mohauty (2008) and Yakusak (2002) opines that the following steps will help in enhancing adult education practicing field;

- All chief executive of state agencies for mass education should have a minimum of a first degree in adult education and must have been in practice for a minimum of ten (10) years.
- Deputy chief executive should have a similar educational qualification and practice for a minimum of five (5) years.
- Officers with at least a first degree would be appointed as adult education officers, and then progresses.
- Retaining all officers that are already working but have no professional training but sending them to acquire the relevant training in Nigerian Universities.
- Recruit and retain workers on the basis of interest and right qualification
- Stop recruiting workers with out any form of adult educational training
- Prepare and conduct studies for officers in the country and beyond.
- Recruit instructors with at least 5 credits and train them on how to handle adults at basic literacy level while in continuing their education.
- All the specialized workers should be made to register with the mother association or professional body.
- Lastly revise all edits that established Agencies for mass Education, to meet up with democratic administration of the present day.

## VIII. RECOMMENDATIONS

In getting the adult education attain professionalism certain qualities must be emphasized during all trainings;

### Physical Fitness

The work involved is tedious and energy consuming and as such the adult educator must be physically and intellectually very fit and sound. Since the society generally is yet to come to terms with the fact that both formal and adult literacy programmes are equally important, getting policies and programmes in adult literacy going is never an easy task. Thus the adult educator must never be tired at repeating visits and consultations to chief executives of organisations in order to acquire facilities and participants for the programme.

The bulk of the activities of the programmes are rural based where basic infrastructures and facilities are poor or completely lacking. The terrain is difficult and basic transportation is lacking or absent; so the practitioner must be conscious of this and be physiologically and physically fit to brace up to these challenges. He may find himself trekking, swimming across rivers, climbing mountains etc.

## Honesty and Objectivity

An adult educator has to be honest in dealing with all participants so that they will have confidence in him. Most of the participants are grown up and have developed some ideology or philosophy of life. There should be flexibility in planning adult education programmes and activities because these programmes can be subjected to acceptance or change as the final decision for implementation are taken with the participants at their time and convenience.

## Sociability

All adult education activities are done in groups of different categories. Adult educationist must always be around to guide and push the work ahead.

## Intellectual Ability

The adult education work is an academic enterprises, adult educators should go on learning and facilitating the learner towards social mobility, growth and national development.

## Uniqueness and Focus

Approaches in handling adults in teaching and learning are different from the conventional school. Andragogy replace pedagogy in teaching and adults must be encouraged to continue learning and participating. Example, adults are never wrong totally, every attempt must be recognized by the instructor

$$\begin{array}{l} 2+3 = 5 \\ 2+3 = 4 \times \end{array}$$

$$2+3 = 4$$

## Human Relations

Adult learners are in literacy programmes because they know what they want to achieve, for that adult educator should be able to establish good human rapport at every given situation on learners needs etc.

## CONCLUSION

Whether leaders are born or made, training enhances quality of leadership. Several studies indicate that adult education is one of the basic inputs in both economic and social development. It is also demonstrated that availability of trained personal in sufficient qualities is a pre-condition of economic development

Therefore adult education programmes requires qualified man power in form of professional adult educators. They should be provided in various categories and in their qualities for effective management of all the programmes.

It is imperative here that those adult education planners must evolve plans that will ensure that sufficiently qualified adult educators are available for the programme implementation. By this professionalism in adult education will usher in effective management of adult education programme for the overall development of the country.

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